

Tommy Tabby Grave

*I am willing at any time to give my all.*¹² In August, 1877 Joseph went to Salt Lake City to confer with Brigham Young, and he was shocked to see how his old friend had aged. He asked Brigham if he was alright, and later recorded their conversation. *'Brigham said to me, 'I feel that I will not be here much longer with this people.' I asked him, 'Are you sick or ailing?' 'No', he replied, 'I never felt better in my life, but I feel I have accomplished my special mission. I have our people firmly established in the valleys of the mountains, and I have lived to see Stakes of Zion organized all over the territory. One temple is completed and others are being built. I feel that my labors will soon be on the other side of the veil.'*¹³

Joseph left President Young's office with a heavy heart, and he couldn't help but remember how more than 30 years earlier he had been with the Prophet Joseph just before his death. He returned to Heber City where only a few days later he learned that Brigham Young had died on August 29th, 1877 with the Prophet's name on his lips. His last words were, *"Joseph, Joseph, Joseph!"*¹⁴

Given
to Heber
by
John
Duke

→ The first settlers at Heber Valley had chosen a site for a cemetery, and Joseph was one of the first to grub sagebrush and haul rocks so that it could be planted in grass. For his labors he was given a deed to a large plot, large enough to provide burial places for his entire family, the entire plot then was valued at \$5! Joseph and all of his wives, except Eunice, who is buried at American Fork, and many of his children are now buried there. At the request of Bishop Abraham Hatch, Dave built the first fence around the cemetery during the early 1870's. All of the graves have markers bearing the usual name and pertinent dates, except one, for a small red sandstone monument has only the letters T T on it. The story of how that small stone came to be there is one of faith and friendship between Joseph Murdock and his Lamanite brothers.

One day a strangely silent line of Indian riders came down out of the mountains and made their way to Joseph's home. Except for a low wailing moan among the women there was hardly a sound from them. As the riders approached, Joseph recognized Chief Tabby in the lead, and in his arms was the body of a

12. How Beautiful Upon The Mountains, Pg. 1003, DUP, 1963.

13. Journal JSM.

14. Essentials Of Church History, Pg. 459, Joseph F. Smith, Deseret Book, 1950.

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young boy. After a subdued greeting, Chief Tabby told Joseph that the body was that of his son, who had been killed in an accident while hunting. The Chief knew that Joseph was the religious leader among his people, so he asked that Joseph bury his son in the custom of the Mormons. With a feeling of great sorrow for his friend, Joseph conducted a Christian funeral service and had Tom Tabby buried under a beautiful pine which had been planted several years before by John H.

When the final prayer was complete, Chief Tabby said, *"My son has been buried in the white man's custom, now he will be honored in the Indian fashion."* A rick of cedar logs was then laid up on the new grave and the boy's favorite pony was led up to it, where its throat was cut and the animal laid on the logs which were set afire. Chief Tabby explained that his son now had a pony to ride in the hereafter. As the fire burned low Chief Tabby thanked his friend Joseph, and then with a heavy heart the old Chief led his people back into the mountains.

Several days later, Joseph cut the initials T T for Tom Tabby onto a sandstone marker and placed it at the head of the grave. Today it is almost overgrown under what is now a giant pine, but it is easily recognized, for the letters T T can still be read and it is the only grave in the cemetery laid out north to south, after the Indian custom. Like the large and impressive monument on the courthouse lawn, it is a memorial to the peace Joseph Murdock brought between his people and the Ute Indians.¹⁵

Many of Joseph's sons and daughters now had wives and husbands of their own, even though his own wives were still giving birth to babies who were their brothers and sisters. To the younger children, those his children sometimes jokingly called his "second crop," their older sisters and brothers seemed more like aunts and uncles. Joseph Gideon was born to Elizibeth on March 26th, 1876 while Royal Stacy was born to Jane the following year, on March 11th, 1878. Franklin Judson, Pernetta's last child, was born on October 12th, 1877. Erastus Coridon was born to Elizibeth on May 26th, 1879, and she also gave birth to Joseph's last child, Andrew Hunter on November 15th, 1881. Although Eunice remained childless and his first child wasn't born until nearly ten years after Hyrum Smith told him he would have a large progeny, no one could doubt the truth of the Patriarch's blessing, for his wives had given him 32 children!

15. Interview with Paul Murdock, February 15th, 1972, SLC.